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## Anti-Human Trafficking Policy in Israel: Success Story?

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# ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING POLICY IN ISRAEL: SUCCESS STORY?

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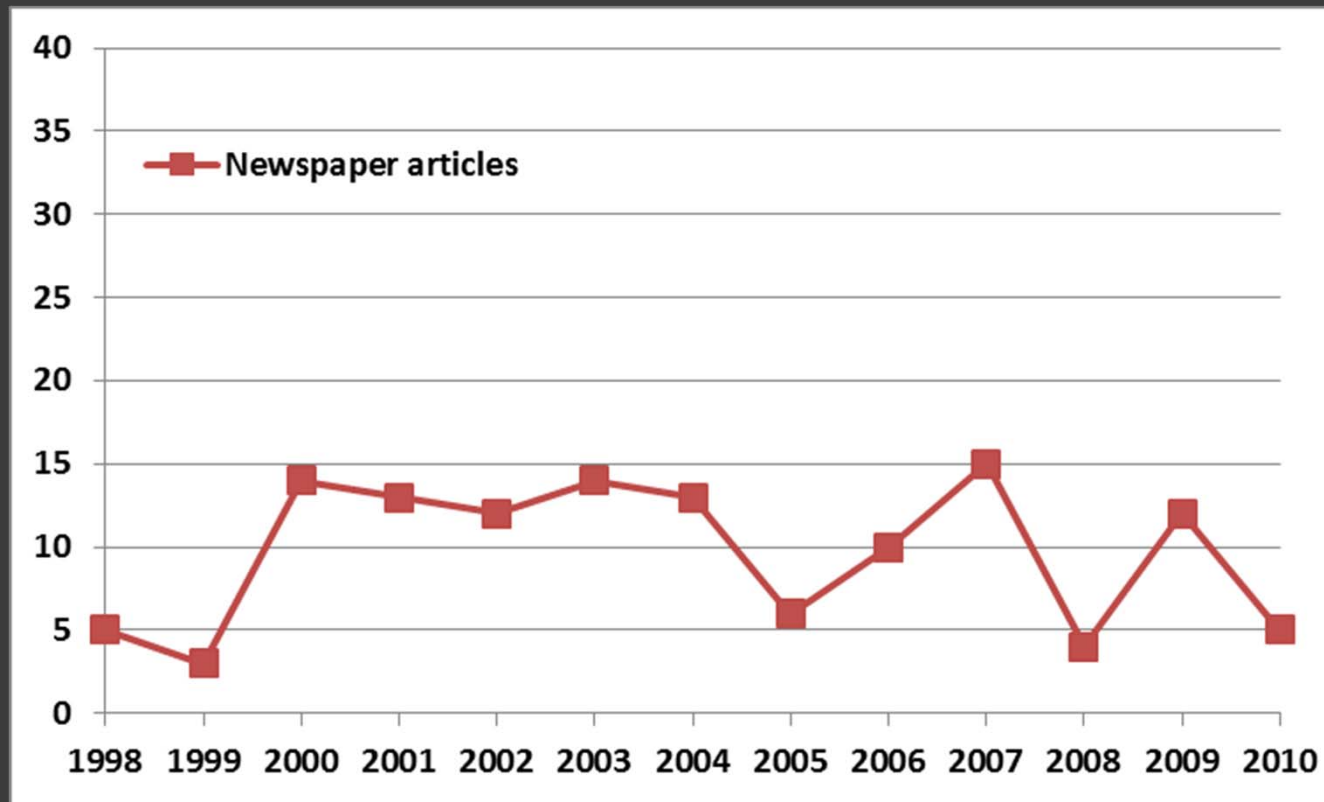
Working Paper Based on Preliminary Research -  
Please Do Not Cite Without Author's Permission

# Background

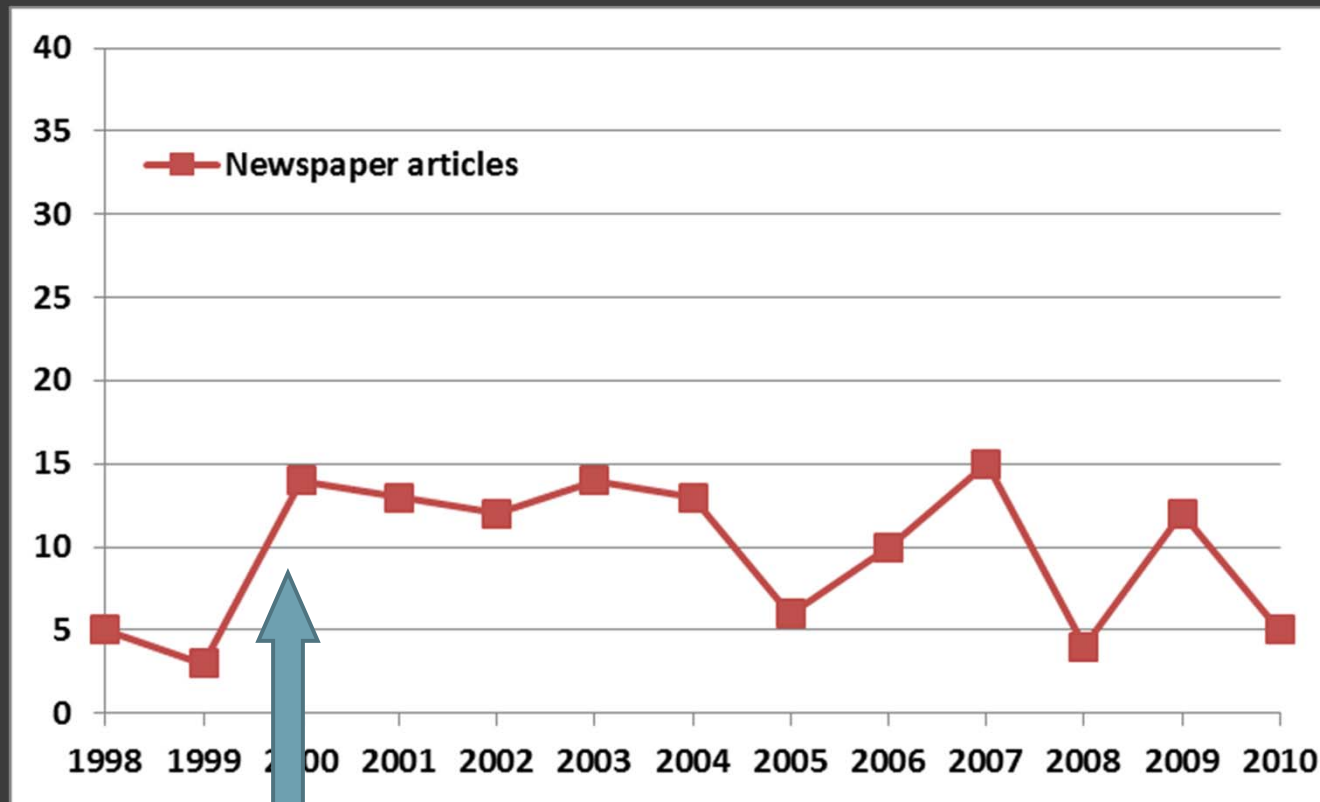
During 1990s:

- Collapse of Soviet Union led to massive immigration wave, which included elements of transnational organized crime networks, bringing in women for the local sex industry.
- Palestinian uprising led to growing dependency on temporary migrant workers for low-skilled jobs.
- 1997 - First NGO report on “Trafficking of Women to Israel and Forced Prostitution.”

# Anti-trafficking Policy Timeline

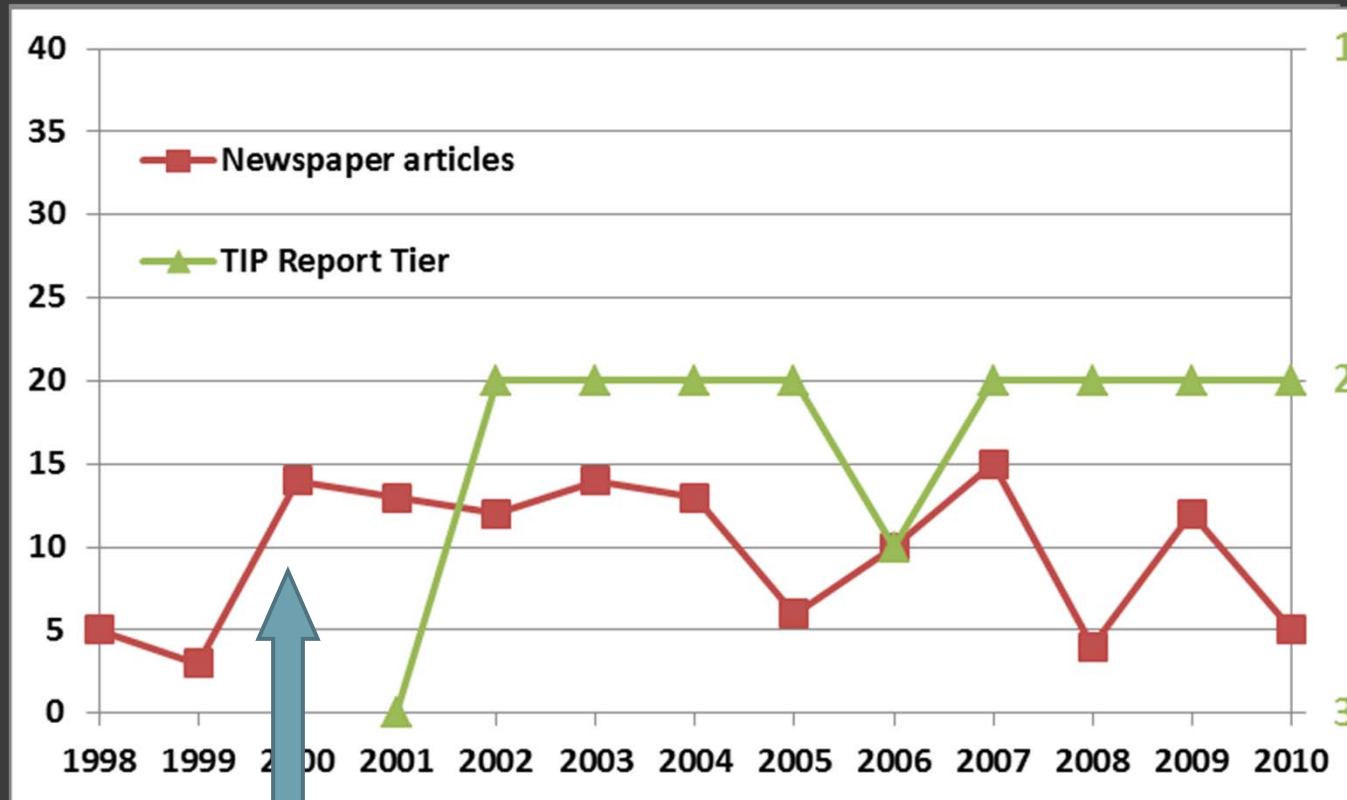


# Anti-trafficking Policy Timeline



**Sex trafficking  
criminalized**

# Anti-trafficking Policy Timeline



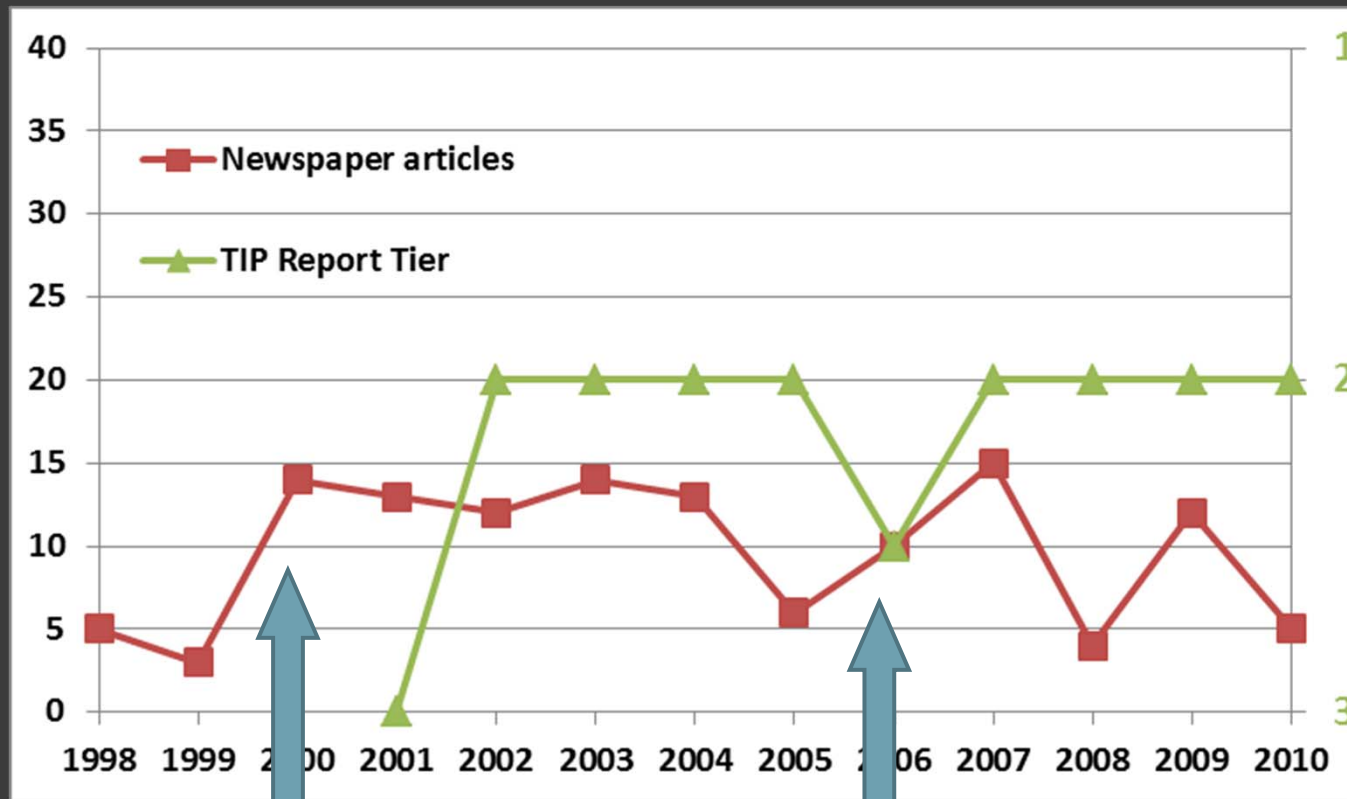
**Sex trafficking  
criminalized**

# Usage of TIP Report by NGOs and Elected Officials

“Best available tool” for putting pressure on policymakers to:

- Recognize the problem (discussion starter).
- Include NGOs in the policy-making process (door opener).
- Support and promote legislation.
- Change perception of trafficked women from illegal aliens to victims.

# Anti-trafficking Policy Timeline

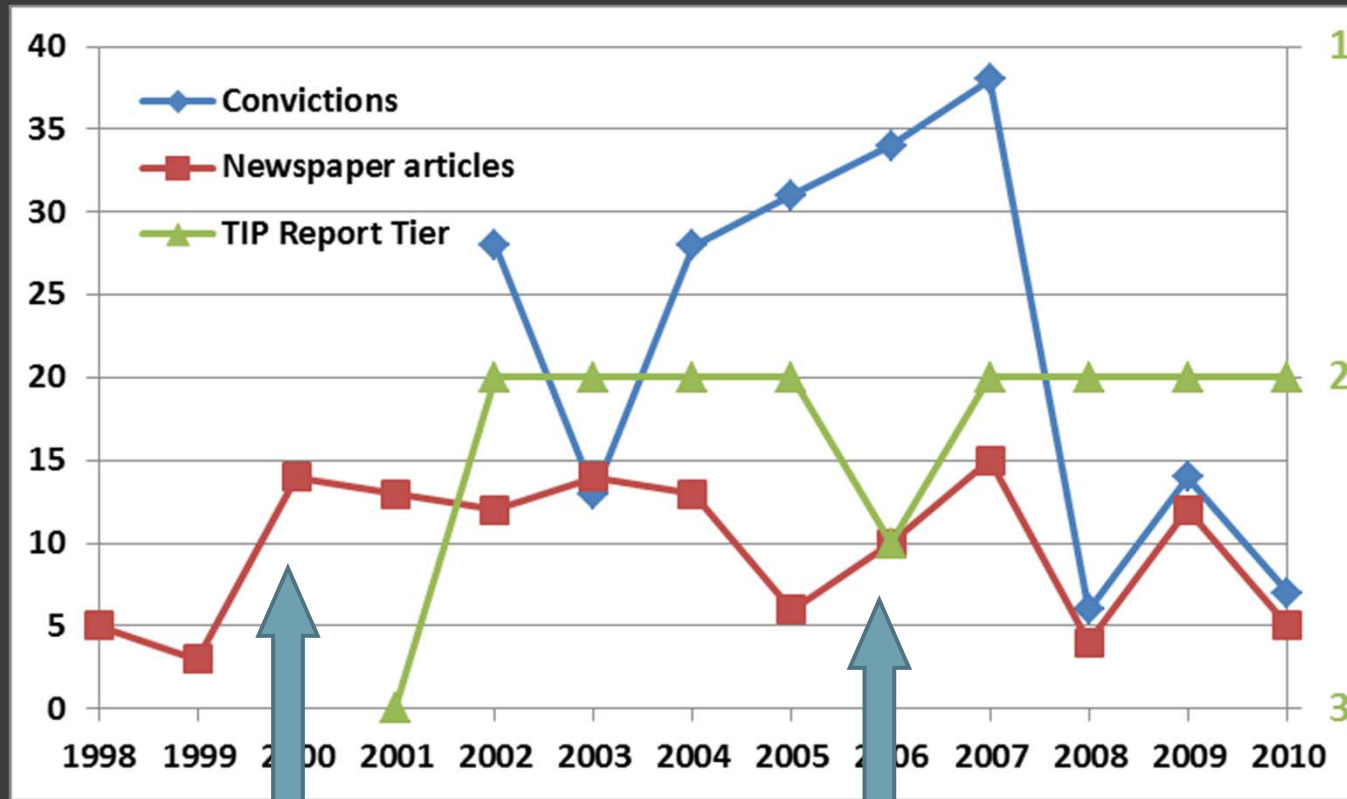


**Sex trafficking  
criminalized**

**All types of  
trafficking  
criminalized**



# Anti-trafficking Policy Timeline



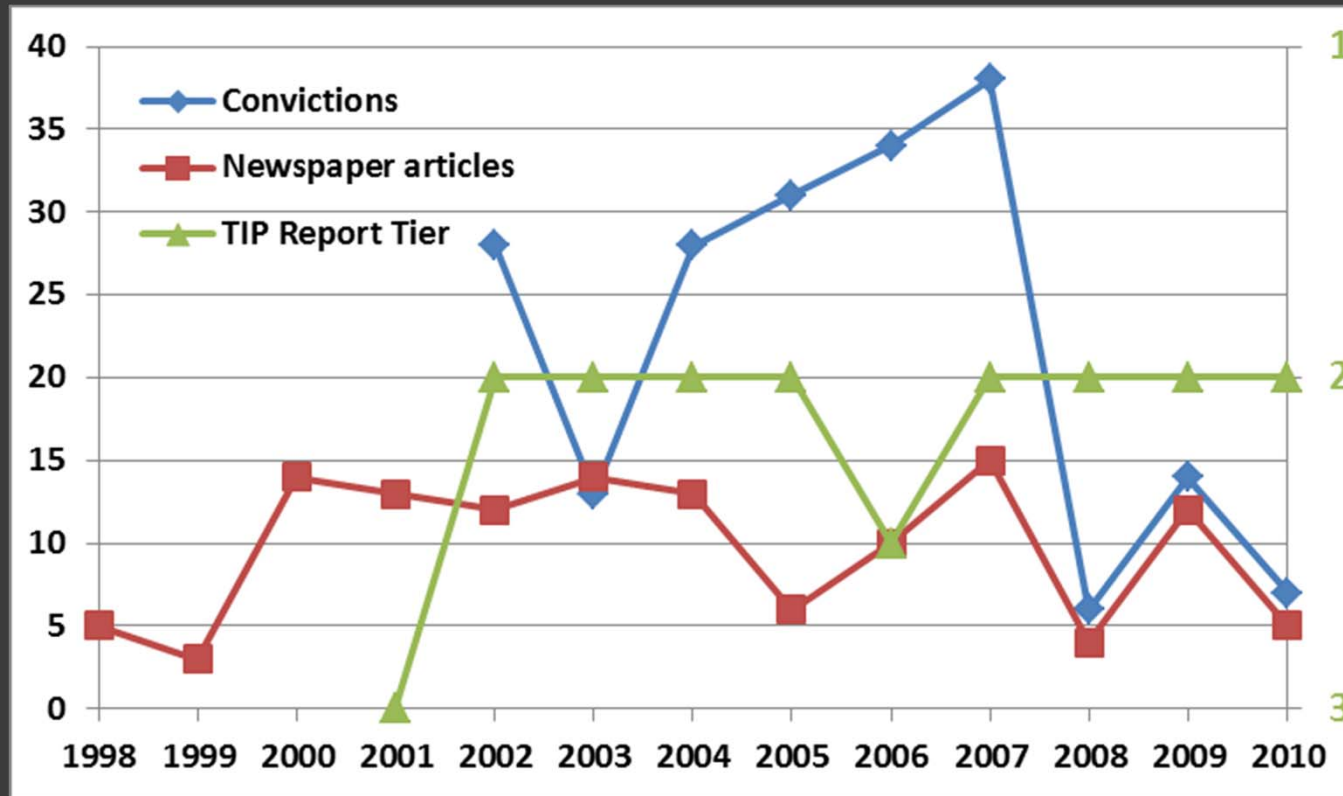
Sex trafficking  
criminalized

All types of  
trafficking  
criminalized

# Additional Policy Measures

- Free legal representation for trafficking victims in civil suits - since 2003 for sex trafficking, 2006 for labor trafficking.
- Short-term work permits for trafficked undocumented migrants - since 2006 for sex trafficking, 2008 for labor trafficking.
- Shelters for trafficking victims - 2004 for sex trafficking (with U.S. dollars), 2009 for labor trafficking victims.
- Government-sponsored awareness-raising campaigns and training for public officials.

# Anti-trafficking Policy Timeline



Awareness  
raising

Policy  
formulation

Policy  
implementation

# Success Story!

- Police official (2007): “In 2003 we used to find women who were being raped, incarcerated and suffering violence. In 2007, the situation is completely different - they get paid in most cases and the conditions that they're in are much more humane.”
- Former judge (2008): “Today there is no trafficking in women in Israel. [...] This thing is over.”

# Success Story?

- ⦿ Success in curbing sex trafficking of non-Israeli women does indicate that a determined, multi-agency effort can work.
- ⦿ However, this success is of limited scope:
  - Excludes Israeli citizens from being recognized as victims (including minors in the sex industry).
  - Labor trafficking of still unaffected – very few investigations and prosecutions.
  - It has become increasingly difficult to continue pressuring policymakers into action.

# Reasons for Stagnation

- Difficulty to conceptualize internal sex trafficking. Anti-trafficking changed discourse on local prostitution.
- No political will to deal with labor trafficking.
- Perception that problem is solved drove issue off the agenda.

# Backlash against NGOs

- ◉ Minister of the Interior Shitrit about the Awareness Center (2007): “With all due respect, don’t grade us or I would start grading you. I don’t want to say what you’re doing abroad... [turns to committee chair] They’re constantly attacking the State, they need to stop this thing, stop this slandering...”
- ◉ Minister of the Interior Yishai about the Hotline for Migrant Workers (2009): “The current administration will enforce the policies aimed at reducing the numbers of illegal workers in Israel and stand firm against anti-Jewish Trojan horses.”